

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                   1.     A stackable crate for holding and transporting products  
2 comprising:

3                   a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface, the side wall  
4 formed so that at least a portion of an opening in the crate has a larger dimension  
5 than the bottom surface; and

6                   a drag rail formed on an underside portion of the bottom surface,  
7 wherein a portion of an inner surface of the side wall is formed to reduce the  
8 dimension of the crate opening in at least one selected area so as to provide a tighter  
9 fit with a drag rail of a crate stacked thereon.

1                   2.     The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall is joined to another  
2 side wall to form a corner, and the at least one selected area comprises the corner.

1                   3.     The crate of claim 1 wherein the at least one selected area  
2 comprises an upper edge area of the side wall.

1                   4.     The crate of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of side  
2 walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein the at least one  
3 selected area comprises an upper portion of each side wall at each corner.

1                   5.     The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall tapers outwardly  
2 from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to  
3 enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a  
4 portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed without taper.

1                   6.     The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall tapers outwardly  
2 from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to

3 enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a  
4 portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed with reduced taper.

1 7. A crate for holding and transporting products comprising:  
2 a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface; and  
3 a drag rail formed on an underside portion of the bottom surface,  
4 wherein an inner surface of the side wall is formed to position at least a portion of  
5 the side wall over the drag rail.

1 8. The crate of claim 7, wherein the inner side wall surface is  
2 formed as a variable radius blend into the bottom surface sufficient to position a  
3 portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

1 9. The crate of claim 7 wherein the side wall is joined to another  
2 side wall to form a corner, and the inner side wall surface is contoured at a lower  
3 surface of the corner so as to extend over the drag rail.

1 10. The crate of claim 7 wherein the inner side wall surface is  
2 formed at a lower edge area proximate each vertically extending end of the side wall  
3 with an inwardly extending taper.

1 11. The crate of claim 7 further comprising a plurality of side  
2 walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein a lower portion of  
3 each side wall at the corner is formed to position a portion of each side wall over  
4 the drag rail.

1 12. The crate of claim 7 wherein the side wall is integrally formed  
2 with the bottom surface so that at least a portion of an opening in the crate has a  
3 larger dimension than the bottom surface, and another portion of an inner surface  
4 of the side wall is formed to reduce the dimension of the crate opening in at least

5 one selected area so as to provide a tighter fit with a drag rail of a crate stacked  
6 thereon.

1 13. The crate of claim 12 wherein the side wall is joined to  
2 another side wall to form a corner, and the at least one selected area comprises the  
3 corner.

1 14. The crate of claim 12 wherein the at least one selected area  
2 comprises an upper edge area of the side wall.

1 15. The crate of claim 12 further comprising a plurality of side  
2 walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein the at least one  
3 selected area comprises an upper portion of each side wall at each corner.

1 16. A method of forming a stackable crate for holding and  
2 transporting products comprising:

3 forming a side wall with a bottom surface so that at least a portion  
4 of an opening in the crate has a larger dimension than the bottom surface;

5 forming a drag rail on an underside portion of the bottom surface;

6 and

7 contouring the inner surface of the side wall to reduce the dimension  
8 of the crate opening in at least one selected area so as to provide a tighter fit with  
9 a drag rail when a crate is stacked thereon.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein forming a side wall  
2 comprises forming a pair of side walls joined together at a corner, and contouring  
3 the inner surface of each side wall to reduce the dimension of the crate opening  
4 proximate the corner.



- 1                   24.    The method of claim 20 wherein forming a side wall
- 2   comprises forming an open-top box having four corners, and contouring the inner
- 3   surface of each side wall at a lower portion of each corner to extend over the drag  
  rail.